

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

After entry of the foregoing amendment, Claims 17, 19-23 and 25-29 are pending in the present application. Claim 30 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 17, 23 and 29 have been amended to incorporate cancelled subject matter. No new matter has been added.

By way of summary, the Official Action presents the following issues: Claim 30 is objected to as reciting an informality; Claims 17, 19-23 and 25-29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Dorak et al. (WIPO Patent Publication No. 00/08909) in view of Kekic et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,272,537) in further view of McIntyre et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,229,538); and Claim 30 is indicated as reciting allowable subject matter.

Applicants appreciatively acknowledge the identification of allowable subject matter as recited in Claim 30.

As the subject matter of cancelled Claim 30 has been incorporated into all of the independent claims, Applicants submit that the substantive rejections of record have been rendered moot. Likewise, as the informality recited in cancelled Claim 30 is also now moot, Applicants respectfully submit that this case is now in formal condition for allowance.

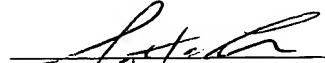
CONCLUSION

Should the Examiner believes any additional formal matters need to be addressed in order to place this application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned, by telephone, at the Examiner's convenience.

Consequently, in view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application, including Claims 17, 19-23 and 25-29, is patently distinguished over the prior art, in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at an early date.

Respectfully submitted,

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